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LABOUR ORGANISER

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Situations Vacant

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MAY, 1952

PRICE FIVEPENCE

Agency Made More Attractive

by A. L. WILLIAMS
National Agent

THE Labour Party has never had the number of full-time Agents it needs to build and maintain an efficient electoral machine. Nor has it ever been able to pay the salary it would like to pay to the Agents it does employ.

Agents' salaries are fixed as a result of negotiations between the Agents' Union and the Labour Party National Executive Committee. The body responsible for conducting the negotiations is the Adjustments Board, composed of representatives of the Union and the National Executive.

In these negotiations the National Executive members represent the whole body of the employers, Borough and Constituency Labour Parties. Decisions taken are binding upon both sides.

Because the Labour Party does not itself employ the Agents it has to take into consideration the views of the employing bodies when Agents' conditions are under review. Obviously, it cannot agree to conditions that it knows the local Labour Parties are unable to grant.

The Agents themselves are well aware that there are limits imposed upon improvements in the conditions of their service by the financial position of their employing parties. That is the reason salary rates always have been lower than they should be.

A proof of the keenness of Agents is that so many are willing to give of their best under conditions less favourable than

those they could obtain in other kinds of employment.

While young men and women can be expected to jump at the opportunity of doing full-time for payment the work they have enjoyed doing voluntarily in their spare time, Agency should be regarded as a career offering chances of advancement as experience and responsibilities grow.

It was to meet this situation that the last meeting of the Adjustments Board agreed, not only to increase the basic salary of Agents, but also to introduce a grading scheme. This scheme will create two main grades, and a special class of Agencies. The majority of Agencies will be included in Grade I, those with special responsibilities may be placed in Grade II, and the few with extra special responsibilities may be put in the Special Class.

There always have been opportunities of promotion for Agents by appointment to the National Organising Staff of the Labour Party, since most of its members are recruited from the Agency Service.

Now, there will be avenues of promotion within the Service itself. Agents will be able to look forward to promotion to higher grades, with corresponding increases of pay as they become more experienced and capable of taking on heavier responsibilities.

This new scheme should make the Agency Service a much more attractive career for the able young members of the Labour Party who have organising ability.

DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE

and

OFFENCE GIVEN

by L. H. M. HILLIARD

General Secretary

*National Union of Labour Organisers
and Election Agents*

THE comments made by the anonymous contributor to the March issue of *Labour Organiser* in the article 'How Does an Agent Spend His Time?' have aroused much interest. It is obvious, however, that the 'reader' has not been spending his time too well within our Movement for had it been otherwise he would have acquired a better appreciation of his subject. In consequence the *Labour Organiser* would have avoided giving offence to that section of the Party's servants who give, without question, the most devoted service to our Movement and, what is more, usually under the most difficult circumstances.

The reader can be excused on the grounds of ignorance or inexperience—the *Labour Organiser*, which for many years was the official organ of the Labour Party Agents, and which has established for itself a position of authority on organisational matters, cannot be so excused.

For the Editorial Board to disclaim responsibility for the opinions expressed in this article or for the implications contained therein is begging the issue. The *Labour Organiser* is not a newspaper. It is a technical journal with a reputation. It circulates widely in a certain, and extremely influential field within the Party. Much of its material is inspired and in the past the conclusions which it has drawn have usually been authoritative. It would have been wiser if there had been either second thoughts about this article or some gentle editorial 'pruning'.

However, the damage has been done and offence given. Agents have proved themselves more than able to deal with the suggestions made—witness the immediate response—while most readers of the

Labour Organiser, having a better understanding of an Agent's duties than the original contributor will, in consequence, have been enabled to get the subject into perspective.

But not the entire article is without merit. The writer is correct when he attacks the poorness of the salary paid and argues the case for a new approach to the problem of employment. As he rightly says all constituencies should have efficient Agents—there should be a levelling up between the poor and the wealthy constituencies. The uncertainty regarding continued employment should be removed. Security should be given the Party's full-time servants in the constituencies as well as at Head office and in the Regions. Higher professional and technical standards should be aimed at and changes made in the procedure for appointment. But then, Labour Party Agents, through their own organisation, the National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents, have been saying these things for more than 30 years and what is more important have done a great deal towards realising these objectives.

Despite the writer's comments the standard of professional competence is to-day extremely high in the Agency Service—indeed the system is such that only the good and the efficient can survive the grim conditions under which the service operates. One either makes good or goes to the wall!

A new salary level has recently been negotiated and a 'grading' scheme established which will provide wage differentials based upon varying levels of responsibility.

A greater measure of security now exists than at any time in the past and the case for a truly National Agency Service, with full or partial financial responsibility being accepted by the National Executive of the Labour Party, is being argued, and pressed, with vigour. I hope the writer of this article will make himself familiar with the Union's objectives. He will find that they closely approximate with his own and that as a result of making himself

(Continued at top of next column)

familiar he will become a propagandist for a 'new deal' towards those whom Herbert Morrison has rightly called the 'Architects of Labour's electoral victory'.

And now just a few words about the conditions under which the average Party Agent operates, and how he spends his time. In the first place he will have no typist—indeed he will be singularly fortunate if he has an office from which to conduct his work, a typewriter with which to deal with his correspondence, a duplicator to deal with his circulars, and a filing cabinet for his records. Even if he has all these essentials every bit of the work will have to be done by himself, drafting, stencil cutting, duplicating, folding, filing, and what-have-you. The more local parties he has the greater will be the volume of secretarial work which he has to do and this alone, together with minute writing, will occupy many hours a week. The more he builds his party, the more contacts he obtains, the greater will be this volume of purely secretarial work.

One constant thought in his mind will be the preparation of his party for an election (and please do not ask which election—there is always one just pending). For this he will be (a) recruiting new members and organising membership drives; (b) sifting through his existing membership for possible active workers or persons with special skills or knowledge who can be fitted into the organisation; (c) building up a 'marked' Register; (d) planning his approach to the particular election; (e) getting together details of advertising sites; (f) examining existing provision for polling facilities and, if inadequate, having them revised.

Every day he will have before him the need of somehow finding the money needed to finance his party—meet the

costs of organisation—provide for the next election and ensure that his salary is paid at the end of the month. Almost certainly 25 per cent of his time will be devoted exclusively to money-raising efforts as distinct from his agency and secretarial duties.

Finally he must attend Ward meetings and Executive Committees, meetings of local parties, Management Committees and Party Executive Committees, special Constituency Party sub-committees on Finance, Elections, Social Activities, Demonstrations, and other specialist subjects. He will be lucky if, in fact, he can get *one* night a week free and an odd week-end when he can take his wife and kids out for the day.

Apart from these considerations he may be required, in many cases, to manage property, run a bookshop or postal book-service, and in one case known to me, be responsible for managing a 'fish and chip' shop which in this particular case serves as the Party's principal source of income.

A Party Agent will do all these things and will give devoted service, working 12 and 14 hours a day, retaining his enthusiasm for his Cause, promoting at all times the best interests of his employing body, for a miserably low rate of pay and often under intolerable conditions of employment because he believes that the job he is doing is worthwhile and, in itself, provides a deep-seated sense of personal satisfaction which compensates for all the difficulties, and disadvantages. Your contributor, Mr. Editor, would have been better occupied in speculating not on 'How an Agent Spends His Time' but rather on how an Agent is able to operate at all under the conditions which now obtain.

TRAVESTY OF TRUTH

by RICHARD WEVELL

AGENT, WELLS, C.L.P.

THE READER who asked in the March issue of *Labour Organiser* how an Agent spends his time is wise to remain anonymous. There must be many Agents apart from myself who felt that the picture of our work is a travesty of the truth.

This does not mean that the writer fails to put forward some interesting ideas

which should receive consideration, but surely we are entitled to expect any critic to find out a few facts before rushing into print with a lot of contumely.

The contributor is not too consistent, either, for among the many statements he tosses before us is one which infers that the average Agent does little work and

(Continued overleaf)

produces few visible results, and another that if all constituencies had had Agents in the last six years there would still be a Labour majority in Parliament. Tut, tut!

This layman's firm opinion is that *very few people are suited to Agency work*, but this does not prevent him from suggesting that a 'panel of approved persons' should be established by the N.E.C., and that a number of 'inspectors' should be appointed whose job, presumably, would be to assist the Agents in their task of doing nothing. *From where all these people are to come we are not told.*

It was also a big surprise to learn that we had typists. Perhaps there are a few constituencies where funds permit such luxuries, but for most Agents these fair damsels exist only in dreams.

Honour demands that some of the jobs which Agents perform should be listed so that laymen will have a better appreciation of their work.

If I draw on personal experience, I am nevertheless sure that most of my points will apply to other Agents in county constituencies.

1. In the morning an Agent's first job is to study the local and national Press. His members expect him to be well-informed. He must also file various items, especially reports of local political events.

2. In some cases he needs to reply to points in the local papers, or to arrange for his prospective candidate or someone else to do so. Often he also has to compose such letters.

3. A certain amount of telephoning has to be done, and accounts and records have to be kept. Cards, literature, posters, forms, etc., supplied, have to be packed and invoiced.

4. Meetings have to be attended — all sorts of them, and many involving hours of travelling. (Last year I attended 122 meetings and assisted at 15 social events.)

5. Speeches and reports have to be prepared and this takes up a certain amount of time.

6. Arrangements for public and other meetings and social events have to be

made—halls must be booked, advertising dealt with, accommodation and transport arranged, and so on. Loudspeaker announcements have to be given.

7. Reports for the Press have to be provided regularly, and the Agent must keep the various reporters informed about the Party's activities. (Many of my local secretaries ask me to draft reports of their whist-drives, dances, and meetings, for our local papers. I gladly do it, but it all takes time.)

8. Plans for fighting elections have to be made, election material prepared, people have to be visited, assistants have to be trained. Printers have to be interviewed.

9. Posters, handbills and circulars have to be drafted.

10. Agents have to play their part in activities outside the division — on the County Federation, on the Regional Council, perhaps in the N.C.L.C. or at week-end schools.

11. All Agents get a number of enquiries from members of the public to deal with, and where there is an M.P., personal cases take up quite a lot of time.

I have even heard of Agents forming a new Party now and again. Your contributor assumes that 12 local Parties is the average, but I know of many with double this number, while I have 33 to cope with. And he seems to be unaware of the existence of Women's Sections and Leagues of Youth.

He also leaves out of account the fact that some constituencies have 50 T.U. branches affiliated.

Some of us even do a bit of canvassing now and then, give a hand with distributing literature, and help to get in some neglected collections.

Some of us visit local Party officers regularly, dealing with their queries, providing encouragement and stimulus. And with it all we have to have the hide of a rhinoceros, the heart of a lion, and the patience of an ox.

If there is one thing, however, which really ruffles our calm, it is for some silly ass to enquire what we do with our time.



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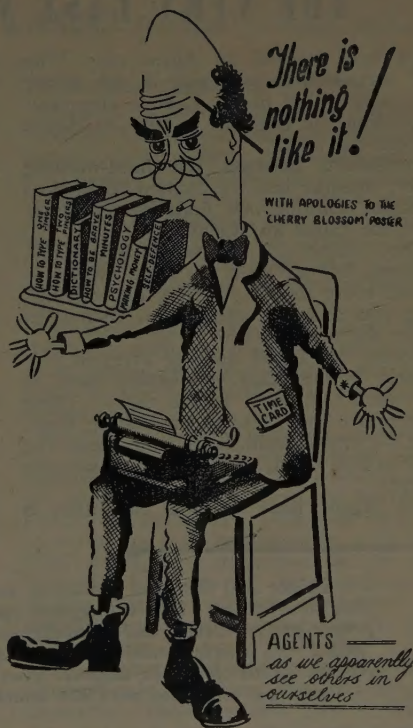
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"AFTER ENJOYING YOUR VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS REPLIES TO THE ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTOR OF THE ARTICLE 'HOW DOES AN AGENT SPEND HIS TIME?' MAY I SUBMIT MY IMPRESSION OF THEIR ARGUMENTS."

NORMAN ATKINSON

Secretary/Agent

DROYLSDEN, C.L.P.



The Headline Was Wrong

AS ANOTHER LAYMAN, but nevertheless a keenly interested member of the Labour Party, I am shocked to see how Agents have rushed to reply to the headline of an article and have tended to ignore the sensible and serious suggestions of the article itself.

It is a pity that such a misleading headline was used by the Editor and a greater pity that he needs to resort to sensationalism to stimulate interest.

Agents may overlook it, but many members of the Party are as concerned as the writer of the original article with such problems as poor Parties, the high qualities needed for Agency, the poor salary paid and the fact that in some cases an Agent can have too many bosses.

Has there never been an unsatisfactory Agent? I suspect there has and I should have thought Agents would have welcomed the suggestions for dignity of status and of a better salary.

Above all, I believe everyone interested in the well-being of the Labour Party will be grateful to the original contributor for tackling a thorny problem, for giving the Agents a chance to put their points of view, for putting questions (to which I suspect he knows the answer) so often hinted at and for suggesting that all Agents should be 'somebodies' and not 'dogsbodies'.

Nottingham.

Voluntary Worker.

THE VERY LAST WORD by Mrs. JEAN BARNES

AS THE WIFE of an Agent may I be permitted to take part in the debate presently going on in *Labour Organiser* regarding the question of how an Agent spends his time.

Somewhere between the hard-working Party member and the exalted position of Morgan Phillips one finds this peculiar creature called an Agent.

They come in assorted sizes, types, colours, but all have the same object, to spend every minute of every day organising you and extracting your money to fight the next election.

Agents are found dashing everywhere—except to the place you expect them to be when you want to see them. Their wives love them (except on Polling Day), the General Committee tolerate them, the Tories hate them, and their Union protects them.

An Agent likes a good candidate, a

healthy bank balance—for his constituency—plenty of willing workers, fine weather for open-air meetings, and a free evening once in a while.

He does not go much on Tory candidates, other Tories, too many letters from Head Office, and 'points of order'.

They are also expert briefcase packers—Parker, Shaw, *Tribune*, Speakers' Notes, time-tables, draw tickets and any other paraphernalia you care to mention always excepting, of course, that particular piece of literature which you want to have.

An Agent is never satisfied; he can drive you frantic with his everlasting demands on your leisure, your pocket, your ability, and your friends.

But at the end of every campaign there is always the consolation that if the Party is victorious he can bathe in remotely reflected glory and if the Party loses the day he can always be given the blame.

The Editor still thinks it was sound policy to print the article which began this controversy. The subsequent spate of letters has shown that many people are perturbed and thinking seriously over points raised. To have 'killed' the article would have been a disservice to the Movement and to Agents. This closes the subject. Next month our original contributor will sum up, and now, who has another 'controversy' worrying them?

SUCCESS STORY

'WE HAVE just taken the County Council seat for the first time.' So ran the triumphant first sentence of a letter recently received at Head Office from Durham City.

'I am anxious to write to you,' went on the letter, 'because we have in 12 months witnessed a remarkable triumph of concentrated organisation and effort. We realised the difficulties the Party was in a year ago, started a Fabian Group, and took every opportunity of spreading our ideals. Election Day was our triumph. Contrary to expectations, Mr. Boyden, our candidate, gained the seat for No. 2 Division by 495 votes.'

'You will appreciate the impressive spirit of our local Movement when I point out

that another of our members, Mr. Illingworth, deliberately contested No. 1 Division, where we had little or no chance, in order to divert opposition strength from our main effort in No. 2 Division.'

Congratulations, Durham City, and congratulations to Mr. Boyden, the successful candidate, who is Director of Extra Mural Studies at Durham University, to Councillor Edge, who acted as Agent, and to Mr. Turnbull, local chairman who for 40 years has given devoted service to the Movement.

Several similar letters have been received but we feel there must be many more good Local Election stories to tell. Readers are invited to contribute their successes, their humorous incidents and their helpful hints. Keep your letters short, however, and the deadline is May 15.

CHOOSING PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

by SARA BARKER, *Assistant National Agent*

THE TASK OF CHOOSING a Parliamentary Candidate places great responsibility upon a Constituency Party, but the procedure laid down in the Constitution and Model Rules ensures the widest possible choice, and the most democratic method of selection.

Nomination

When the Executive Committee of a Constituency Labour Party, in consultation with the National Executive Committee, has decided on the desirability of contesting the seat, the General Committee of the Party should give authority to the Executive Committee, again in consultation with the National Executive Committee, to invite nominations.

Right of nomination

The bodies entitled to nominate an individual are those organisations entitled to representation on the General Committee of the Constituency Labour Party, and the Executive Committee.

The circular inviting nominations is prescribed by the National Executive Committee. It will indicate the period during which nominations can be made, and the timetable should be such that it would allow ample time for organisations to meet and consider nominations.

Eligibility of nominees

All nominees for Parliamentary candidatures must be individual members of the Labour Party. They must, if eligible, be members of a Trade Union, and must not be members of, or associated with, political organisations not eligible for affiliation to the Labour Party.

All nominations must be submitted on the official form prescribed by the National Executive Committee and carry the consent of the nominee.

If the nominee is on the official panel of an affiliated organisation, the form must have the consent of the nominating body.

Before the General Committee is convened to consider the nominations, the Executive Committee must submit all the nomination forms to the National Executive Committee in order that the validity of the nominations may be determined.

The Selection Conference

When all the forms have been stamped as valid, the Executive Committee of the Constituency Labour Party may tender advice and submit a short list to the General Committee before final selection is made. All valid nominations should be placed before a meeting of the General Committee, where the final short list is agreed, and the date fixed for the selection conference.

This meeting has the power to decide that the nominations received are unsuitable, or inadequate, and in that event selection would be deferred; and further nominations invited.

When the date of the selection conference has been fixed, which again must allow adequate time, delegates are convened by special circular prescribed by the National Executive Committee. Delegates entitled to attend are those appointed by organisations entitled to representation on the General Committee of the Constituency Labour Party, who were appointed to attend the Annual Meeting and for the ensuing year.

The nominees will address the Selection Conference in accordance with an arranged timetable. Each nominee may be questioned, but it is very important to note that when the speeches have been made, and questions answered, no delegate or officer must be allowed to speak on the merits of the nominees.

The delegates will vote on the performance of the nominees, and not on opinions expressed by others, or attempts to sum up the merits.

A Chairman who permits any contribution to be made after the nominees have spoken, is failing in his duties.

A ballot vote must be taken on the basis of one vote per delegate, and a majority decision must be reached.

Throughout the proceedings the National Executive Committee must be represented by an officer, or a representative appointed for this purpose.

The adoption of a Parliamentary Candidate is a serious and important task. The democratic procedure provided in the Constitution for selection is intended to assist constituencies to make the best possible selections.

THOSE NOMINATION PAPERS

by Len Sims

ALTHOUGH CANDIDATES and election agents were asked to exercise great care in respect of nomination papers, many 'phone calls and letters have been received at Head Office from angry members to the effect that their nomination papers had been rejected by the Returning Officer. Some felt it was the Returning Officer who was at fault, some even felt that he had exceeded his duty. In all cases it was due to a fault in the nomination paper itself.

Let us therefore consider the whole question of nomination in order to be clear on what is required. Nomination is a formal procedure whereby a person is put forward as a candidate for election to Parliament or the local authority. The nomination paper is the prescribed form for that purpose.

The Returning Officer

The function of the Returning Officer in respect of nomination is clear and specific. His duties are defined in the Election Rules, 2nd Schedule, of the Representation of the People Act, 1949. So far as his making a decision on the validity of the nomination paper, this is governed by Rule 13 (2) which reads as follows:

"The returning officer shall be entitled to hold a nomination paper invalid only on one of the following grounds, that is to say—

"(a) That the particulars of the candidate or the persons subscribing the paper are not as required by law; and

"(b) that the paper is not subscribed to as so required."

His duty, therefore, is to satisfy himself as to the validity of the nomination paper as a legal document. He cannot determine the qualifications or eligibility of the person being nominated. It must be confined to the above.

Decision as to validity. The decision of the Returning Officer that a nomination paper is valid cannot be questioned. Where a nomination paper has been declared invalid it can be challenged on an election petition. This, of course, is a costly procedure and would only be undertaken if it was certain a wrong decision had been made.

● AGAIN WE HAVE WITNESSED
● NOMINATION PAPERS BEING
● DECLARED INVALID, RESULTING
● IN SOME INSTANCES IN SEATS
● BEING LOST THROUGH FAILURE
● TO FILL THEM IN CORRECTLY

Most candidates or their election agents should ensure that their nomination papers are 'vetted' in advance of the final day for delivery so that any mistake can be remedied in time. The majority of Returning Officers are only too pleased to co-operate as it assists them, especially in local government elections, to know a little in advance who the candidates will be and where the contests are to be fought.

Provision is made in the Rules whereby the Returning Officer can be requested to prepare a nomination paper for signature. Whilst this should not be necessary, it is wise to consult him where doubt arises.

In a number of instances where slips have occurred on nomination papers delivered before the final day, candidates have received an intimation to that effect. This is not a requirement but done solely out of a desire to be of help. Actually L.E.R. Rule 9 (2) states:

'As soon as practicable after the latest time for the delivery of nomination papers, the returning officer shall examine the nomination papers, and decide whether the candidates have been validly nominated in accordance with these rules.'

It is essential, in order to be perfectly safe, to see that the nomination papers are correct before delivery.

Nomination papers which are rejected have to be endorsed by the Returning Officer and state the reasons for his decision. Notification of his decision is sent to each candidate at the place of residence stated on the nomination paper.

THE NOMINATION PAPER

This can be dealt with in two parts. First the necessary completion of details—which must be done before the electors are asked to subscribe—and secondly the actual subscription. The top of the nomination paper is formal and requires only the filling in of certain blank spaces and the deletion of some words. If the date of the Notice of Election is not known it can be seen on the official poster issued by the Town Clerk or Returning Officer. We now come to the point where a number of mistakes have occurred—the filling in of

particulars in respect of the candidate. Let us therefore take the various heads in the panel for entering these details.

Candidate's Surname. It is laid down that the surname shall come first in the entry of names. In the case of a compound surname it is usual to begin with the first of the names forming the surname.

Where a person's popular name is different from his true name, or where there is any doubt as to any of his names, it is best to give his supposed legal name and also his reputed name. The true name must precede, not follow, the other—such as 'Wray—Arthur commonly known as Pat'.

Place of Residence. A person's residence is where he lives and sleeps and not his place of business or one of his several places of business (R. v. Hammond, 17 Q.B., B 772). The object of this is to give the place of residence by which the candidate can be easily identified.

Description. The description of a candidate must be sufficient to enable anyone to establish identity of the candidate with the person described in the nomination paper. In most cases the mentioning of the occupation, such as 'Miner', 'Compositor', 'Bricklayer', etc., is sufficient. The description must not refer to his political activities nor, just to introduce a humorous but true note, must it describe the candidate as 'tall, slim build, blue eyes, moustache, aged 31'.

If the description is unwieldy, the Returning Officer can, after consultation (if possible) with the candidate, election agent, proposer or seconder, shorten the description or substitute another.

The panel, when complete, should be on the following lines:

Candidate's Surname	Other names in full	Place of Residence	Description
SMYTHE	HAROLD JOHN	8 FRANCIS ROAD LEYTON, E.10	COMPOSITOR

Now we come to the second part—the correct entries of those subscribing the nomination paper. Here, too, we have experienced faulty entry and consequent rejection of papers.

SUBSCRIBING THE NOMINATION PAPER

The nomination paper must be filled in before it is subscribed by anyone and it is

the election agent's duty to see this is done. It is not sufficient just to send out blank nomination papers to individuals for completion.

The first subscriber should be the proposer, next the seconder, followed by the assentors.

Where the nomination paper bears the signatures of more than the required number, those appearing first on the paper in each category (proposer, seconder, assentors) are to be taken into account to the exclusion of the others. This means that any additional name or names, even if correct, would not replace one that is not.

An elector must not subscribe to more than one nomination paper for the same candidate nor, if there is more than one vacancy, to more nomination papers than there are vacancies. If he does his signature is inoperative on all papers but the first.

Signature of those subscribing. The persons subscribing the nomination paper must not only be qualified but registered as local government electors in the electoral area, or within the constituency in Parliamentary elections. While it is not specifically laid down that such signatures must be in full, it is wise to copy the entry in the Register. This is especially true in the case of a person having only one Christian name. J. Smith could be 'Joan', 'Jessica', 'John', or 'James' Smith.

'It is desirable,' says *Parker*, 'that the subscription should agree with the elector's name as entered in the Register.' We support this view and stress the omission of signatures that are doubtful—such as inaccurate entries in Register. It is far better to obtain plain, straightforward

signatures than include one that is in doubt.

Finally, but most important, comes the electoral number. This must be included and, as a number of nomination papers were rejected because of the omission of the distinctive letter of the polling district, the wording of Note 3 on the nomination paper is quoted:

(Please turn to page 98)

TAKING RISKS

by F. R. ADAMS, F.C.I.I.

THE RESPONSIBILITY placed by the common law on occupiers of structural property is to keep the property which they occupy in a reasonably safe condition so far as the exercise of reasonable care and skill can secure this. The extent of the responsibility varies according to the relationship of the occupier with the persons coming in contact with the property. Persons visiting premises occupied by another may be either:

- (i) invitees who go by reason of an invitation of the occupier, express or implied;

duty to a visitor, whether he be 'invitee', 'licensee', or 'trespasser', and injury or loss results, then the occupier is liable to pay damages to the sufferer. There are many ways in which this liability arises in practice. A visitor may catch his foot in worn linoleum or may fall over a door mat; a rug or mat may slip on a polished floor; a chair may collapse under the weight of a visitor or clothing may be torn on the rough edge of a table; an overcoat may be scorched by a carelessly placed electric fire; a visitor's clothing may be damaged by ink or plaster may fall from the ceiling.

We did not realise that insuring premises was such a complicated business until an incident in an Agent's office prompted us to ask the Manager of the Accident Department of the Co-operative Insurance Society, Ltd., to write this article.

- (ii) licensees who go with the permission of the occupier;

- (iii) trespassers.

Constituents calling at an Agent's office for advice, people attending committee meetings, tradesmen carrying out repairs, are examples of 'invitees', and to these the person or organisation responsible for the office owes the duty of taking reasonable care that the premises are safe.

Commercial travellers or others who may call at an office in the course of their business (as distinct from the occupier's business) are examples of 'licensees'. To 'licensees' the occupier has no duty to ensure that the premises are safe, but he is bound not to create a concealed danger which is not apparent to the visitor but which is known—or ought to be known—to the occupier.

'Trespassers' call at an Agent's office at their own risk, but the occupier is under a duty to prevent any danger which would show a reckless disregard of a 'trespasser's' safety.

If the occupier of premises fails in a

during a meeting. A visitor may endeavour to open a window, and discover too late that a sash cord is broken; an hospitable Agent may offer a visitor tea or a sandwich and discover later that he has provided the basis for a claim for damages for alleged food poisoning.

These are examples of the types of accident that arise in offices, but the list is not exhaustive. Claims may be made by the occupants of other parts of the building in which an Agent's office is situated if water or gas escapes. A cigarette end thrown in a waste paper basket may start a fire which may spread, and a whole series of claims may be made against the unfortunate occupier.

Sufficient has been said to demonstrate that every Agent should arrange an insurance policy indemnifying him and his employers against the liabilities arising from the occupancy of his office. Claims from apparently trivial accidents can be for substantial amounts, and it is recom-

(Continued top of next column)

mended that insurance should be obtained for a sum of about £10,000 for any one accident or series of accidents arising from one cause. The insurance should include an indemnity against injury or damage arising from fire and explosion (remember the possibility of a leaking gas pipe or a dropped cigarette end) and food poisoning. How much will this cost? That depends on the judgment of the insurance office which is asked to issue the policy, but for the average Agent's office an indemnity of £10,000 for any one accident, with cover for fire, explosion and food poisoning, should cost about 10s. a year.

The policies issued by insurance companies covering the legal liability to the public of occupiers of offices and other business premises are usually described as Public Liability insurances. Agents should, however, note that such policies do not usually cover fire and explosion risks nor food poisoning risks unless a request has been made for that cover and the policies have been specially worded. It would be wise to examine Public Liability policies already issued or any which may be asked for as a result of these notes, to make sure that there has been no oversight.

There are two other points to be borne in mind when Public Liability insurance is being arranged in respect of Agents' offices. Firstly, these notes relate solely to the liability of the *occupier* of a rented office to the public: if the building in which the office is situated is owned by the local Labour Party, then there are other risks involved and an insurance should be arranged which will cover Property Owners' Liabilities as well as the occupiers' liabilities. Secondly, a Public Liability insurance policy issued in connection with the occupation of a rented office will not cover liabilities to the public arising from public meetings in schools or similar premises, garden parties, fetes, whist drives or similar activities. You should consult your insurance company about Public Liability insurances for such occasions.

Public Liability policies, like all insurance contracts, are founded on the principle that there must be the utmost good faith between proposer and insurer. If there are any particular dangers to the public in connection with the office, then you must tell the insurers so that they are aware of all the circumstances before they decide whether a policy can be issued.

APPRECIATION

W. H. JACOB

by W. STEWART RAINBIRD

W. H. JACOB was my colleague in East Ham during the difficult decade of 1935-1945. Before then, we had contacts in the Agents' Union, for he followed me as Chairman of the London District just after the initiation of 'Pensions for Agents', and the long agitation found in him a better champion.

When Will Jacob arrived in East Ham South Constituency there was already a powerful organisation there, and in the North Division, and also in the Borough Party, yet, after the debacle of 1931, the Movement needed strong-willed, confident guides. His great organising ability, coupled with robust health and energy, found full scope locally, in the County Federation, in the many ramifications of the London Co-operative Party, and on the Executive of the Agents' Union.

Will could not be inconspicuous if he tried; he was a large, hearty, erect man, with a curious dignity I never knew to desert him. Subtlety merely puzzled him; he had always a clear notion of objective, and went straight for it with a hard, and sometimes hurting punch. When policy was determined, however, the same force was used with loyalty, and similar energy.

Will Jacob was a proud, bold, fearless man, and a first-rate organiser, and I, with many others, salute the memory of a most forceful, loyal, and faithful servant of the Socialist Cause. What epitaph could be better?

New Appointments

THE National Executive Committee have authorised the following new Agency appointments:

Mr. G. W. Baker to Bedford Constituency Labour Party.

Mr. D. G. Hughes to Northwich Constituency Labour Party.

Mrs. B. B. Elliott to Holborn and St. Pancras South Constituency Labour Party.

Mr. F. W. Harcourt-Munning to Wembley South Constituency Labour Party.

Mr. C. J. Bloomfield to Carshalton Constituency Labour Party.

Mr. A. Dowling to Glasgow City Labour Party.

LABOUR POSTAL VOTES

by R. W. G. MACKAY

IN THE 1951 election in Reading North there were about 1,800 postal votes, of which probably 1,100 were Conservative. We must not slip up in this connection again, and it is important that the people who need a postal vote should be found now. An elector is entitled to a postal vote if he is unable, or likely to be unable, to vote in person by reason of:

- (a) The general nature of his employment.
- (b) Physical incapacity (including blindness).
- (c) Removal from his qualifying address to an address outside the Parliamentary Constituency for which he is registered.

Class (a) covers all those who are subject to long hours at work away from home, such as commercial travellers. Class (b) covers all cases of permanent disability, such as cripples, and also people suffering from some casual illness of a fairly prolonged nature, which may reasonably be expected to last over an election period. By now all Area Managers should have a list of the electors in their own particular area who need a postal vote. People on this list will continue to be eligible for a postal vote:

- (a) Until the voter cancels it, or ceases to be registered for his present qualifying address, or becomes registered in a different capacity.
- (b) Until the Electoral Registration Officer gives notice to the elector to the contrary.

Monthly Returns

It is suggested that the Sub-Agents should obtain from their Area Managers at least at monthly intervals particulars of people who are postal voters. No one should canvass them without taking with him the necessary forms, RPF 7 for classes (a) and (b) and RPF 8 for class (c).

Special Index Form

Once it is known that a person requires a postal vote, the Area Manager, or Street Steward, should see that form RPF 7 or RPF 8 is completed, and where this is a medical matter, it means getting the doctor to certify it. It is wise also to devise some kind of special index form in addition, giving all relevant details, which the Area

Manager can send to the Agent so that he is kept fully informed. The final step is then to see that a note is made of the fact that the elector concerned needs a postal vote on the canvass card in the street folder, and that a duplicate card is made out and inserted in the separate Postal Vote Folder at the back of the box.

Checking Postal Votes

When the next election campaign opens a list of postal votes will be made available. Obviously the work outlined in the preceding paragraph must continue until the next election, and of course particularly during the next campaign. This list is generally made available eight days before Polling Day, or two days after Nomination Day, and each Sub-Agent will receive the list of persons who are postal voters in his area.

The Candidate should see that a roneoed letter is prepared which will be sent by Sub-Agents to all postal voters in their area, together with a copy of the candidate's election address. These will be posted to all the postal voters who have moved out of the Polling District, and will be delivered by hand to all postal voters who are still residing within the area. It would also be wise to call on these latter people at a slightly later date to make certain that they do actually complete and return the postal vote forms. A list should then be compiled of all the Labour people who have sent in their postal votes.

General Points

Too great emphasis cannot be laid on the importance of the postal vote, and the work of locating and recording them should be put in hand immediately. The period of an actual election campaign is not very long, certainly not long enough to discover and deal with all the postal votes in a constituency, on top of all the other matters requiring attention at that time.

For example, in Reading North in 1951 this work was not undertaken early enough, with the result that although we did succeed in getting in a lot of postal votes, we did not get all we should have, and in actual fact the Tories obtained

(Continued at foot of next column)

A Critic Answered

I HAVE READ Mr. Belben's letter in your last issue, and while there may be much in it with which I agree, I find it so typical of an attitude of mind which must be changed if good organisation is to be secured.

He says that one need not grumble about a poll of 87 per cent and refers me to such facts as the freezing of the register and the number of people who have died, etc. We knew in Reading perfectly well all the people who had died and all the people who had moved. In 1951 13 per cent of the electorate did not vote: 5 per cent of that number could not because they had died, but 8 per cent could, and in times like 1951 a seat such as Reading North will not be won unless some of those remaining 8 per cent do vote. That is the whole point of the exercise, but Mr. Belben has completely refused to see it or to understand it. If 95 per cent of the electorate are available, we need 95 per cent of the ones available, or 91 per cent of the people on the Register. It is this additional good organisation which is going to make these seats safe seats. I do not argue for a moment, of course, that we should get people to change their point of view in time for the next election, and that this means education—the more the better, but we are still at a stage when there are ordinary working-class people living in very poor areas who are not bothering to vote, and we might as well get hold of them first. My suggestions about the polling day machinery he says are nonsense, but of course he quite misses the point once more. Obviously if you have enough

sufficient postal votes over and above the Labour postal votes to win the election there.

On polling day, for instance, we found that many cripples who should have had postal votes were taken to the poll in cars, which was a waste of very valuable car space and equally valuable time. This sort of thing can be avoided if Area Managers take the necessary steps soon enough and build up a complete and accurate record of postal voters. All of this means that Area Managers must know their districts inside out, and if this is so, then they will obtain one hundred per cent of the possible postal votes.

people, you can handle what organisation you require: no doubt that is the lesson of I.C.F. or the Railways, or something of that kind. But this is a *voluntary* organisation, which only works one day in every four or five years, so you cannot expect it to be expert. The point, therefore, is to give to one person a job of work which is not too much for him to do, so that he is neither worried nor rushed. Moreover, if you divide it up in the way suggested into small units and give a person say 300 Labour voters to look after, then that person can get to know the voters in between elections and can do a great deal of very good work in regard to postal votes and so on.

I do not understand the figures about cost, because it cost us very little—all the Committee Rooms, I think, were lent. I am sorry to see that he has given instructions to curtail the use of them, because the more decentralisation the better, and anyone who has worked with any success in business appreciates the importance of it.

As to the twelve Sub-Agents. I do not know why Mr. Belben jumps to the conclusion again that they are full-time jobs with a large wage bill, because they are not full-time and of course they do not get paid. The organisation of Reading North to-day consists of the Agent, who happens to be Agent for both North and South Divisions and who is, naturally, paid. There are then twelve sub-agents who are voluntary workers and part-time only, and who look after a polling district each. These polling districts are then divided into three or five areas, and altogether we have 36 Area Managers, all voluntary, and each of them has to look after approximately 1,000 electors, or say about 500 Labour supporters, although of course it does not average out quite like that.

The net result of this is that the Area Managers have their boxes containing the cards in card index form, and being in fact a duplicate of the register. They know which are the Labour people, and it is their duty to keep the cards up-to-date with all available information as to whether an elector needs a postal vote, what removals there are in the area, and so on. It is a perfectly simple and completely voluntary organisation.

R. W. G. Mackay.

JIM McGRANDLE

ASSISTANT SCOTTISH ORGANISER

VARIATIONS ON AN OLD THEME

WELL! WELL! this is just the old gramophone record being played again. At least that is how I felt when asked to submit an article on the result of the recent Membership Campaign in Ayr Constituency. However, it will not do any harm to tell this story of very basic organising. I have always enjoyed door-step work and I like to encourage members to do more and more of it.

I would like to devote the space afforded to me on the following: Preparatory work; method of approach and gathering of information; the follow up and recording of this information.

I approached the Constituency Party and offered to spend a fortnight with them to start a membership campaign. My offer was accepted and I informed the Party that the campaign would start in the Burgh of Ayr (pop. 44,018) and progressively extend to other towns and villages in the Constituency.

Ayr Burgh has never taken kindly to the setting up of Ward Committees and I knew it would be hopeless to try and organise a campaign on the basis of each Ward Committee working on its own. If the campaign was to be a success it would require the united effort of all members to work through the town ward by ward. Only by doing this could I get a sufficient number of volunteers to make up a team of workers for each night of the fortnight.

I asked the Constituency Party secretary to convene an aggregate meeting of all individual and affiliated members of the Party in the Burgh of Ayr and extend an invitation to the neighbouring town of Prestwick and the village of Monkton. The meeting took place with about 50 Party members present.

After explaining the method to be adopted and asking them to place themselves completely under my control, I was successful in getting the names of persons available on one or several nights of the fortnight. A list of at least 8 people, who were willing to canvass, was drawn up for each night.

At this meeting I consulted the representatives from Prestwick and Monkton

asking them to arrange similar meetings in their own areas so that the campaign might be extended.

I explained that at this stage we were not going to waste time canvassing Tory areas or streets. I wanted the local people to draw up a list of the streets where known Labour supporters lived—there was no recorded information available except for a few sections of the register which had been marked by myself on a previous occasion. They agreed to compile this information and get a supply of membership leaflets and cards, together with some blank canvass cards, without the register pasted on.

Six members, including myself, set out and my briefing was as follows: When canvassing a street with separately numbered houses the information should be recorded on the blank card as follows:

Name of Street.

House No. 3—3F

5—2F

7—4A John F

9—6F

11—2D

When canvassing a street with tenement blocks where several families lived at the same number:

Name of Street.

House No. 67—Smith 4F

Jones 2F

Black 3D

Brown 3F Alice A

Perhaps not 100 per cent efficient, but simple enough for the novice to record with the minimum of writing.

The approach was simply to say: 'Good evening—I represent the Labour Party and we are conducting a membership campaign in this town. Are you a Labour supporter?' If the people approached are not supporters they will tell you so. It is best not to argue and a good method of breaking off any would-be time wasters is to excuse yourself by asking who lives next door. This gives you an opportunity to say a polite 'Goodnight' and allows the work to be carried through quickly.

When calling at houses where there is some hope of Labour support try to get

beyond the front door. Once inside the door you will find you can enrol a new member or members 9 times out of 10. Fill up the membership Form and Card; tell him that he will be regularly notified of Ward meetings and other activities which you would like him to attend if possible. All visiting should be stopped about 9 p.m. because most people are beginning to prepare for bed and callers are not received with open arms.

One thing struck me rather forcibly—more than two people going to a door has a bad effect. People are inclined to be a bit scared if he or she is confronted with several canvassers on the doorstep. Go in pairs wherever possible, but never more than two.

The information recorded on the blank canvass cards can be transferred to the Register of Electors and provides a good basis for a marked register. This, if possible, should be done in the presence of the canvassers to show them the usefulness of their information. This encourages them to extract the maximum amount of data during their canvass, because they see their work is not being thrown aside.

One word of warning—it does more harm than good to embark on a membership campaign without, first of all, getting the assurance of existing Party members that contributions will be collected regularly. Why is it that members are loath to do this very essential job of work? I calculate that two hours per month can collect 25 members' fees. This is a job anyone can do if they can walk at all. Streets should be allocated to members according to their physical ability. The excuses 'I'm too busy', or 'I just haven't the time', which are so often used are worn thin now. Every member, regardless of the position they hold in the Party, can find that extra two hours per month and plan his or her work accordingly so ensuring that our greatest asset—membership—once recruited is not lost.

What of the results? During the fortnight a total of 551 new members were recruited, over 50 per cent of them women. Even the pessimists in the Party who said 'Och! we've tried this before and we can't get members' were enthusiastic. The canvassers themselves grew to enjoy the work; their fear had been dispelled.

I took a team of workers from Ayr and travelled to Prestwick to give them a boost in their campaign and our night's work resulted in 98 new members. This tangible sort of co-operation did far more to

cement the bond of comradeship between these two Local Parties than all the pep talks and exhortations which had gone before. The Ward Committees have been strengthened and the candidates and Agents given a greater reserve of workers to draw from during election campaigns. A greater knowledge of Labour support has been recorded and most important of all, petty squabbling within the Party has diminished.

An active Party has no time for internal quarrelling!

CAN ANYONE BETTER THIS WARD RECORD?

WE ARE PROUD of our membership figures in this ward and wonder if they are bettered in any other Party. In 1947 we had 220 members, to-day we have 900. In 1949 we had an average paying membership of 563 throughout the year and the total collected was £163 19s. In 1950 average membership 785, total collections £223 17s. In 1951 average membership 890, total collections £250 2s. 10d. Averages per member of 5s. 10½d., 5s. 8½d. and 5s. 7½d. per annum. The Electorate of the Ward is around the 7,000 mark and it returns three Tory Councillors with votes from 2,000 to 2,500 against a Labour Vote of from 1,650 to 2,000.

All the subscriptions are collected monthly, house to house, by six collectors. Gains and losses are adjusted each month from their reports.

Three Public Meetings have been held recently in the ward and 3,000 *Betrayal*, 3,000 *I Voted Tory* and *Butler's Budget* leaflets distributed. We campaign all the time and hope this year to reach 1,000 paying members.—Alan Howard, Secretary, Seedley Ward, West Salford, C.L.P.

Jim Cattermole Moves to E. Midlands

The National Executive Committee has appointed Mr. James Cattermole to the post of Regional Organiser for the East Midlands and Secretary to the East Midlands Regional Council. Mr. Cattermole has been the Assistant Regional Organiser in the London region since March, 1948, and his new appointment fills the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Tom Baxter.

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THOSE NOMINATION PAPERS (continued from page 91)

'A person's electoral number is his number in the register to be used at the election (including the distinctive letters (if any) of the register and of the parliamentary polling district in which he is registered) . . .'

The nomination paper is then complete. A specimen of the subscriptions follows for guidance.

The procedure is reasonably clear and straightforward and many of the worries of candidates and election agents would

be overcome if time and thought were given to this matter well in advance. Do not hold up delivery until the last moment—it can be too late.

Remember also, the Returning Officer is not such a bad fellow as one might imagine. He has a lot to do at this stage of the proceedings and considerable responsibility in ensuring the many duties falling upon him are carried through to schedule.

Signature		Electoral Number (see note 3)
Proposer	Arthur W. Burfitt	A 627
Seconder	Nellie A. Parnell	A 103
* We, the undersigned, being local government electors for the said (Ward) (Borough), do hereby assent to the foregoing nomination.		
1.	Charles Smith	B 227
2.	Annie E. Smith	B 226
3.	James T. Cochrane	A 449
4.	Bertram A. Mills	A 521
5.	Jane Seymour	A 806
6.	Norman H. Parsons	B 229
7.	Elizabeth A. North	A 732
8.	William J. North	A 733

* This wording would vary according to the election being contested.



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